Alabama Chess Antics

The Official Publication of the Alabama Chess Federation

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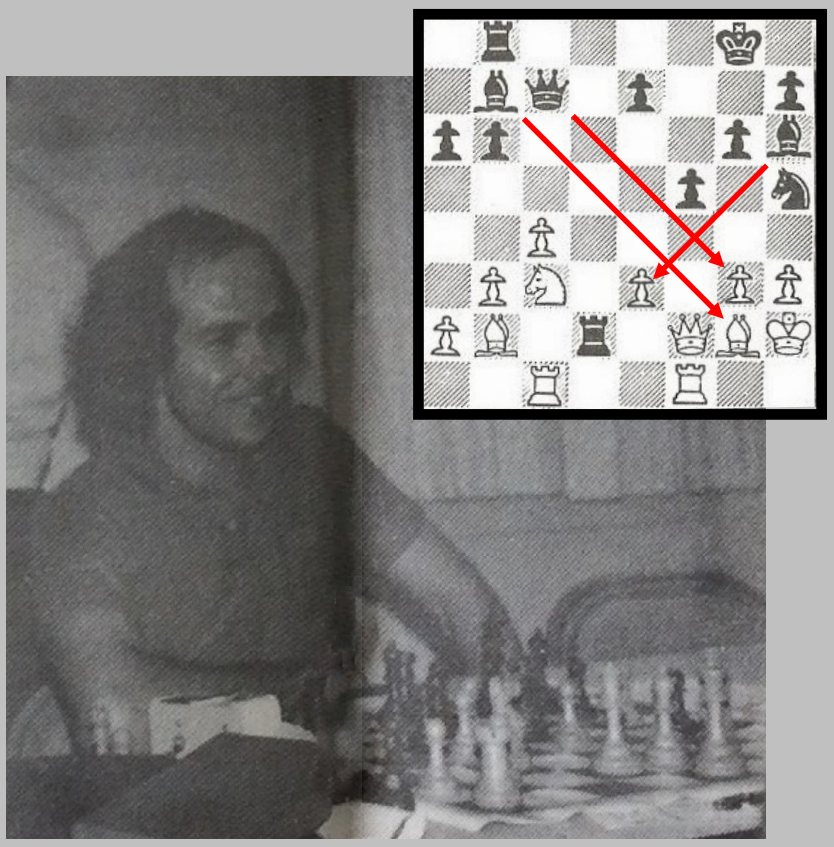
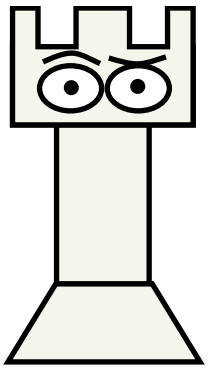
Summer 2021



Lars Britt

Alabama Chess Antics **Editor, 1978-1988**

Greetings from the Editor



Hello again, and welcome to the whopping 28 pages of the Summer 2021 *Antics*! Many thanks to **Paul Nager**, **Bill Melvin**, **Caesar Lawrence**, **Jonathan Rasberry**, **Doug Strout**, and **Aaron DeCord** for taking the time to produce content for this *Antics*.

As a special feature of this issue, we have a tribute to Lars Britt, the long-serving *Antics* Editor of the late 1970s and almost all of the 1980s. (Astute readers will notice the retro, 1980s-style ACF logo on the cover of this issue, to fit with this theme.) Lars made huge contributions to Alabama chess, to put it mildly, so it is long overdue for the *Antics* to acknowledge his lifetime achievements. Thanks again to Paul Nager for suggesting this, and thanks also to those who helped on the *Antics* Preservation Project; the information from those old *Antics* made it possible to learn a lot more about Lars' time as Editor.

Looking ahead, we are all becoming aware that the pandemic is now getting worse (again) in Alabama. As of now, an in-person 2021 Alabama State Championship is still planned for September 18-19 in Montgomery, but the ACF leadership will monitor the situation and make any adjustments as needed. In strange times like these, it is impossible to predict what conditions will really be like, so we will see.

The deadline for submissions for the Fall 2021 issue of the *Antics* is November 15. Submit photos, games (preferably in .pgn format), and articles via **Alabama.Chess.Editor@gmail.com**.

-Scott Varagona

ACF Membership

Any individual may become a **Regular Member** upon the payment of annual dues of **$15.00**. Regular members may enter ACF tournaments and receive special publications or notices from ACF as they are issued. Any chess club seeking to become an **Affiliate** is required to file the Affiliate Information Form with the Secretary of the ACF and pay annual dues of **$35.00**. Benefits of becoming an affiliate include the right to bid to host ACF-sanctioned events, such as the Alabama State Championship, and to receive advertising through the ACF for your tournaments.

Alabama Chess Leaderboard

Top 50 Regular Ratings (retrieved from uschess.org on 8/7/2021)

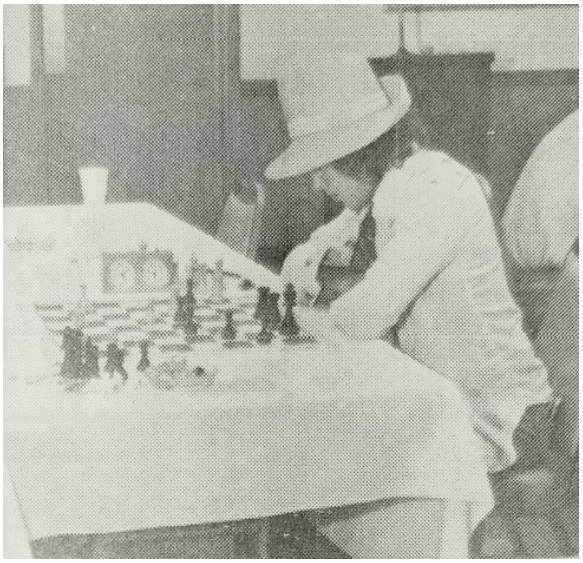
Only players with rating activity within the past year are listed.

1	IM STUART RACHELS	2605	26	JEFF TOBIN	1842
2	YURY A BARNAKOV	2283	27	JOSHUA VARNER	1838
3	MATTHEW PUCKETT	2272	28	GARY W BAWGUS	1816
4	SCOTT VARAGONA	2265	29	SARVAGNA VELIDANDLA	1802
5	BILL MELVIN	2209	30	TIM BOND	1800
6	STEPHEN J GRAVELING	2140	31	XAVIER BRUNI	1785
7	GERALD A LARSON	2133	32	JOSHUA WAKEFIELD	1781
8	AARON DECORD	2123	33	VIKHRAM BALAGEE	1761
9	BRENT INMAN	2095	34	KEN D KIRBY	1733
10	ISAAC SNOW	2093	35	DAVID HAYES	1722
11	JONATHAN RASBERRY	2092	36	KENNETH SLOAN	1721
12	ANDY REEDER	2075	37	ALADDIN S LATEEF	1715
13	TEJAS V THORAT	2066	38	JAMES R GRIFFIN	1697
14	THOMAS J DENTON	2053	39	SHERWOOD DONG	1678
15	CONNOR V LUNNEY	2047	40	JONATHAN SMITH	1657
16	GEORGE RUSYNIAK	2034	41	GABRIEL T NOLAND	1654
17	CHARLES L MEIDINGER	2030	42	NATHANIEL B TILLMAN	1634
18	MILES MELVIN	2017	43	MARIANO RUNCO	1615
19	FARUK E ERGIN	1992	44	SAMUEL G BASKARRAJ	1601
20	WILLIAM D FOX	1983	45	LAWRENCE D FISK	1600
21	OM BADHE	1969	46	CONSTANCE WANG	1568
22	KIRK D PETTY	1900	47	CHARLES E CLARKE JR.	1558
23	MICHAEL B GUTHRIE	1891	48	JOSHUA H LIN	1555
24	MICHAEL W PORCELLI	1863	49	LOGAN W MERCER	1551
25	BRIAN C WIGGIN	1862	50	VICTOR LUNDY	1550

Remembering Lars Britt

by Scott Varagona

Lars Britt—Mobile's legendary chess player, chess promoter, and tournament organizer—served as Editor of *Alabama Chess Antics* from 1978 to 1988. The Alabama chess community was deeply saddened when he passed away in 2016. Now, the very magazine that he poured so much of his heart and soul into—the *Antics*—honors him with this memorial article, reminiscing about the Lars Britt golden era of the *Antics*.



Lars Britt, 1951-2016. (Photo from the 1976 Alabama Open. November '76 Antics.)

The late '70s was a tumultuous time for our chess magazine. In 1977, the ACF received a proposal to merge with the Georgia Chess Association and become the "Southeastern Chess Association." (See Dec. '77 *Antics*.) As part of this deal, the *Antics* could be subsumed by *the Chessman*, a Georgia chess magazine that reported on chess news from Georgia and various other states. It seems doubtful that a full merger between Alabama and Georgia ever took place, but in 1978, *the Chessman* did begin reporting on Alabama chess news—and the *Antics* temporarily disappeared.

Thankfully, the ACF's own publication (and independence) endured: the *Antics* was resurrected at the end of 1978, now with a new editor—Lars Britt—at the helm. And so began what would be his 10+ years of service and dedication in this role.

What I find most incredible about Lars Britt's work on the *Antics* is the fact that, in most years, he produced *five* issues of the magazine—and without the benefit of modern-day desktop publishing. This must have been a grueling task. (See, for example, the January 1979 *Antics*, where Lars talks about his struggles with a hand-me-down typewriter…) Many of the articles in these *Antics* were written by

Above: an example of the title banner seen in most of Lars Britt's Antics from the 1980s. Lars was the first editor to bring color to the covers of the Antics. Below: a cartoon from the January 1985 issue.

Lars himself. Moreover, he did all this work on the *Antics* while also organizing many tournaments in the Mobile area and running the Mobile County High School Chess League. Not to mention, he performed various other incidental tasks for the ACF through the years.

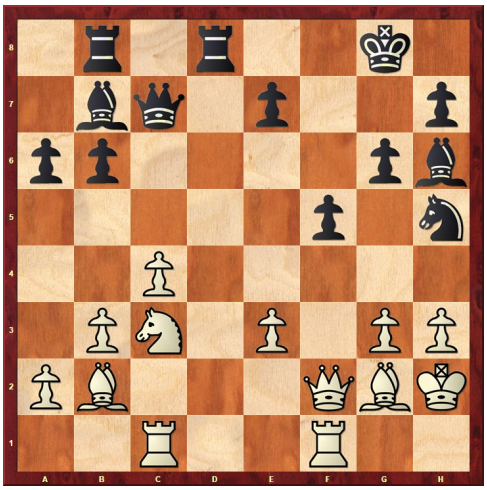
Lars Britt's *Antics* magazines had a lot of charm and character, with many fun anecdotes and cartoons to accompany the countless reports, crosstables, and games. His magazines

also famously featured nicknames for various prominent Alabama players. Noteworthy examples of nicknames

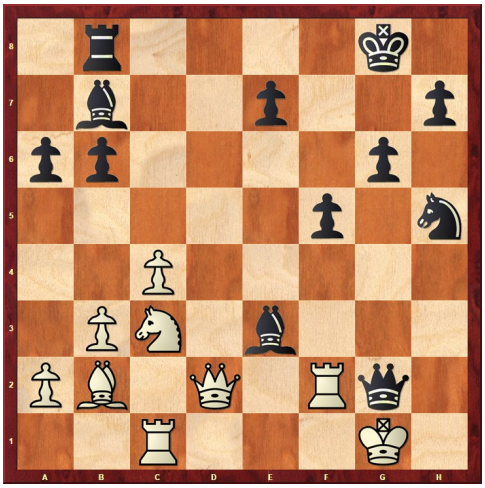
include "The Great American" (Brent Inman), "The Bay Minette Flash" (Joe Jurjevich) and "The Man From E.G.O." (Tom Denton). However, Lars himself had a nickname too: "Blazing Diagonals." This nickname came about thanks to a memorable game from the November 1981 *Antics*—a game which Lars regarded as "probably the best game of my entire career."

Joseph Scott (2021) - Lars Britt (1778)
Atlanta July Open 1981

1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 Nf6 5.Nc3 0–0 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0–0 c5 8.b3 cxd4 9.Nxd4 Rb8 10.Bb2 a6 11.Qd2 Qc7 12.Rac1 Ne5 13.h3 b6 14.f4 Bh6 15.e3 Rd8 16.Qe2 Nh5 17.Kh2 Bb7 18.fxe5 dxe5 19.Nf3 e4 20.Ne5 Qxe5 21.Nxe4 Qc7 22.Qf2 f5 23.Nc3



23…Rd2!! 24.Qxd2 Qxg3+ 25.Kh1 Qxh3+ 26.Kg1 Bxe3+ 27.Rf2 Qxg2# 0–1



"Blazing diagonals" indeed!

It takes a lot of work to put the *Antics* together—volume after volume, year after year. Since Lars had produced the *Antics* continuously for so many years, one could imagine the stress and burnout he must have felt near the end of his tenure. He almost stepped down from the position in 1987, but then a crisis arose: some of "the powers that

Putting the Antics together can be stressful…
(Cartoon from March 1987 Antics)

be" in the ACF wanted to replace the *Antics* magazine with something else—possibly a cheaper, more stripped-down newsletter—that Lars felt would be inferior. (See August 1987 *Antics*, page 28.) Fortunately, Lars defended the traditional *Antics* and the magazine survived, with Lars remaining as *Antics* Editor for one more year. Then, at last, facing new workplace responsibilities that were just too demanding, Lars did resign as editor in the August 1988 *Antics*.

Having served at his post for over 10 years, Lars Britt's contributions to Alabama chess culture were immeasurable. He was not only the longest continuously serving *Antics* Editor, but also one of the longest continuously serving ACF officers in history.

I only met Lars once, but our meeting was fateful for me. It was at a Queen of Hearts tournament, about ten years ago. I was a relatively new *Antics* Editor back then, and Lars introduced himself to me. He handed me a bunch of extra copies of old *Antics* he had from the 1980s and said to me, "You are the editor now, so these are yours!" It was with this simple act that Lars gave me a whole new hobby: researching and preserving Alabama chess history. Lars Britt's extra magazines were the start of the *Antics* Preservation Project and all the "Time Machine" articles that the *Antics* has now. Thank you so much, Lars, for this precious gift to me and to Alabama chess.

Lars Britt will be among the individuals inducted into the first ever class of the Alabama Chess Hall of Fame in 2021. With the ACF's permission, I am also printing the Hall of Fame entry for Lars Britt (written by Paul Nager) in this *Antics.* I'm sure Lars would have wanted it that way. ■

Lars Britt truly was "King of the Antics."

(Cartoon seen at the end of November 1979 and many other late '70s Antics.)

Lars Edmond Britt: Alabama Chess Hall of Fame 2021

by Paul Nager

Lars Britt is a significant individual in the history of Alabama chess, particularly in the documentation and recording of Alabama chess history from the mid-1970s to the turn of the century. He attended Murphy High School in Mobile, Alabama, and promoted chess for much of his adult life. He directed the historic Mobile-Baldwin County Chess League for some 20+ years, and directed over 100 tournaments. He served as chief editor of the Alabama Chess Federation's quarterly published *Alabama Chess Antics* from 1978 to 1988, before the era of desktop publishing. He had a peak rating in the 1800's.

The Mobile-Baldwin County Chess League has been in continual existence since the 1970-71 school year (now 50 years!), in which local high schools have met and competed for the league title at numerous league matches held throughout the school year. Lars played for Murphy in the first year of the league. It wasn't long until he took over direction of the league, in the mid-1970s. Under his direction, the league thrived and grew and produced many of the state's strong chess players and the first Alabama representatives at the Denker Tournament of High School Champions. During that era, Mobile was the center of scholastic chess in the state, and Lars also directed over a dozen of the State Scholastic Team Championship tournaments. The results of the league and State tournament were routinely documented and reported by Lars as editor of the *Antics*, including photos of the winners (often on the cover) and taken during play. (These old *Antics* have thankfully been scanned and preserved in PDF form for viewing today on the ACF webpage.)

In addition to editing and publishing the *Antics*, Lars wrote and submitted articles on chess happenings to the *Mobile Press Register* regularly for years (archived on microfiche). But the labor of the *Antics* included typing up the articles, formatting, copying, stapling, addressing, stamping, and mailing them to the tune of some 250 copies, four or five times a year for over a decade. The pages within included tournament results, ads for coming tournaments, photos with captions, and annotated games submitted by players. A truly rich archive of Alabama chess history. Lars also worked in the arts, and this skill came out in the flair of creativity expressed in the *Antics*.

The late '70s and the 1980s was a time of colorful characters on the Mobile chess scene, and nicknames for players became common. Lars became known as "Blazing Diagonals" after a game in which Lars' bishops blazed away on the diagonals of his opponent. (This game was published in the *Antics*.)

Lars passed away in August of 2016. In tribute to Lars, and in recognition of all the tremendous work he did on behalf of the Mobile-Baldwin County Chess League, the league members voted unanimously to name an award in his honor. The top Varsity 1st Board player wins The Paul Morphy Award (as Mr. Morphy attended Spring Hill College in Mobile) and the top Middle School 1st Board player wins The Lars Britt Memorial Award. One person said it well: that Lars gave much of himself so that others could enjoy playing chess. ■

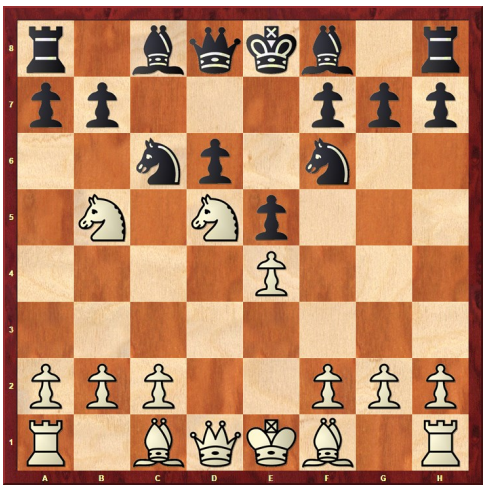
Above photo from Lars' obituary, retrieved from casonfuneralservice.com.

Bill Melvin at the National Open

By NM Bill Melvin

Bill Melvin – Lopez Hernandez
(2200) (2100)
National Open (Round 4), June 19, 2021

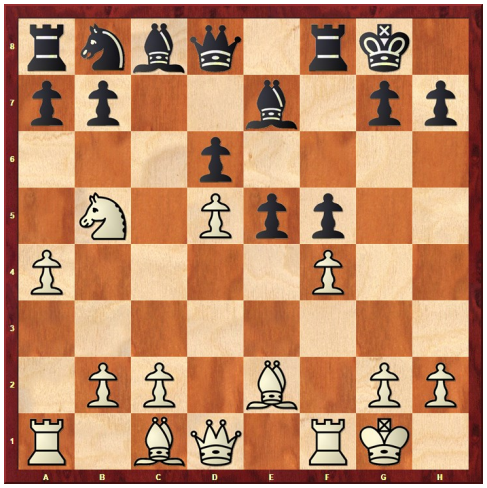
I played in the National Open for the first time this year in the U2300 section. I finished with 3 wins, 2 losses, and 2 draws. Faced a lot of under-rated young people, but thought that I played well overall. This is my favorite game from the event. ChessBase magazine has been running a feature recently where they give an opening repertoire within a single game. I've decided to do the same thing here! Everything you need to know about a system for playing against the Sicilian Svesnkikov is given in this game. **1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5 6.Ndb5 d6 7.Nd5**



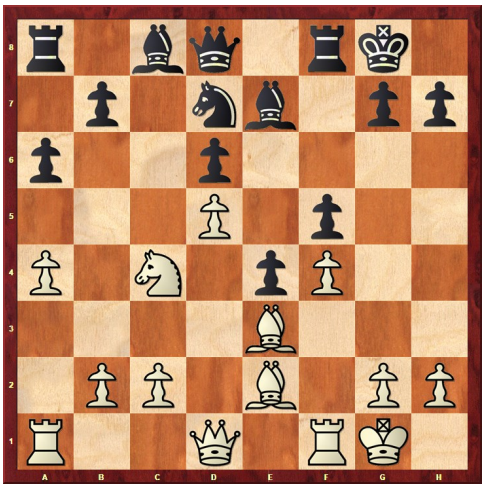
This move was played 5 times by Fabiano Caruano in his World Championship match against Magnus Carlsen. I've been playing this line for decades when it was considered offbeat, so I was surprised that one of my pet openings had suddenly become mainstream. **7...Nxd5 8.exd5 Nb8** [8...Ne7 Black's other main alternative and the most frequently seen move. Most players don't like to put the knight on b8 although the moves are objectively equivalent. 9.c3 Tricky line requiring black to play precisely. *(9.c4* Caruana - Carlsen World Championship match games.*)* 9...Nf5! **a)** 9...Ng6?! 10.Qa4 Bd7 11.Qb4 Qb8 12.Qc4 Kd8 13.Be3 b6±; **b)** 9...a6?? 10.Qa4 Black's position is so bad that the computer prefers 10. ... Kd7 as the best way to stay in the game at all! 10...Kd7± *(10...Qd7 11.Nc7+ Kd8 12.Qxd7+ Bxd7 13.Nxa8+-; 10...Bd7 11.Nxd6#)* ; 10.a4 White aims to play similar to the game with the knight being rerouted to c4. 10...Be7 11.Bd3 0–0 12.0–0 Nh4 13.f4 a6 14.Na3 exf4 15.Bxf4 Ng6 16.Bg3 Bh4 17.Bxh4 Nxh4 18.Nc4± White's position should be far easier to play.] **9.a4** This was considered an unusual move when Caruana played it against Carlsen in game 8 of their match. While 9.c4

Bill Melvin

seems natural and provides c3 as a fine retreat square for the knight, the knight is actually better positioned on c4. The d5 pawn isn't craving protection. c4 can still played later on if needed. This move was my preparation and one that I'm constantly forgetting! **9...Be7 10.Be2 0–0 11.0–0 f5 12.f4**

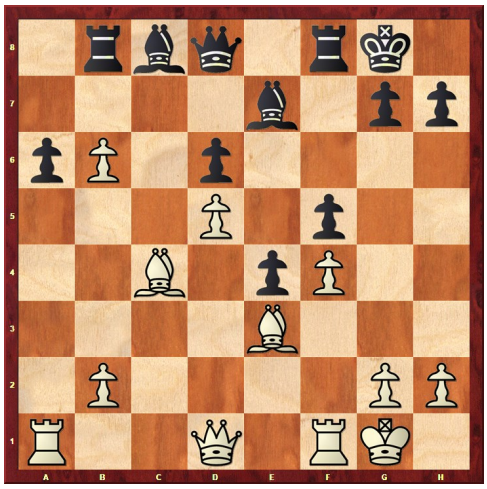


White is fine with leaving the knight on b5 until Black forces it to leave. Sooner or later, Black will feel compelled to kick it away. That weakens the b6 square which is exploited with the knight on c4. **12...a6 13.Na3 e4** Black usually plays this move. White is fine leaving the tension and Black would constantly have to evaluate for tactics involving the pawn exchange. While this protected passed pawn looks daunting, Black needs to find something constructive to do for the next 30 moves. White is going to attack on the queenside. Black doesn't really have active play on either side of the board. **14.Be3 Nd7 15.Nc4**

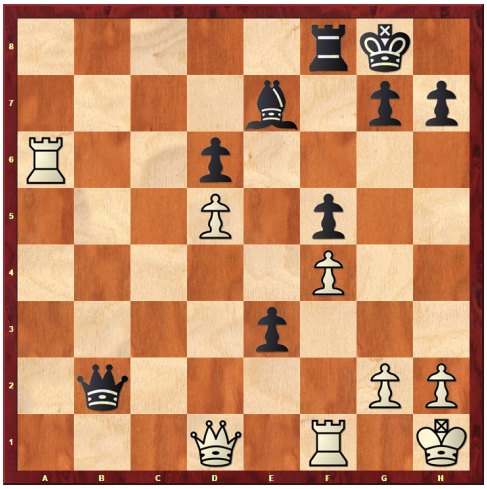


This is the full extent of my preparation. White has a slight edge with good play on the queenside. **15...b6 16.a5** Gives away the advantage according to the computer. That's at a level way above mine! **16...b5 17.Nb6 Rb8 18.c4 Nxb6 19.axb6! bxc4 20.Bxc4**

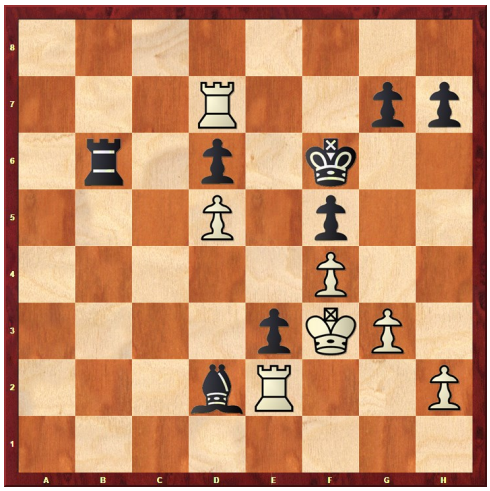
The queenside is falling apart. All according to plan.



20...Rxb6 Surprisingly, the computer likes this exchange sacrifice. I didn't trust it during the game. White keeps a slight advantage, but it apparently isn't a lot. **21.Bxb6 Qxb6+ 22.Kh1 Qxb2 23.Bxa6 Bxa6 24.Rxa6 e3?+-**

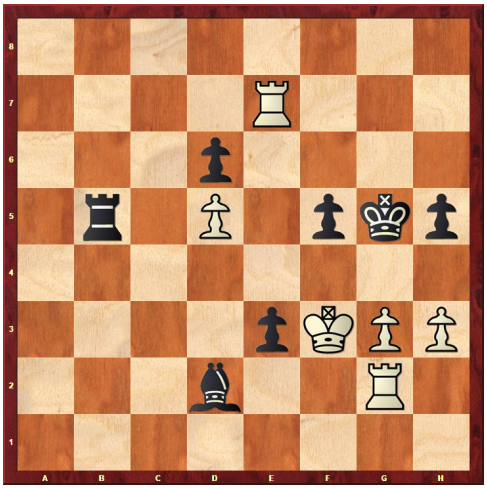


This is a silly move. Black's army isn't prepared to escort it home. The protected passed pawn just gave up its protected status. White should be winning now. [24...h6=; 24...Qb5=] **25.Qb1?!** [25.Re1+-] **25...Qd4± 26.Qd1 Qc4 27.Ra4 Qc5 28.Re1 Bf6 29.Qd3 Re8 30.g3?!** [30.Rc4 Qa7 *(30...Qa5 31.Rcc1±)* 31.Qxf5±] **30...Qc3?!** [30...e2!= Black apparently gets enough counterplay to equalize.] **31.Qxc3 Bxc3 32.Re2 Bd2 33.Kg2 Kf7 34.Kf3 Rb8 35.Ra7+ Kf6 36.Rd7 Rb6**



This was a fun position to play. My d7 rook ties down the b6 rook. The d2 bishop is tied to the e3 pawn. While this would appear to tie down the e2 rook and/or the white king, white has some activity to pursue on the kingside. **37.h3 h5 38.Rg2 g5** An attempt at an active defense. Black simply does not have any useful moves. **39.fxg5+ Kxg5 40.Re7** This is

one of those subtle moves that is easy for the computer but still brings humans great delight to find over the board. White is threatening to weave a mating net. **40...Rb5?!** [40...Kf6 41.Re6+ Kf7 Was relatively best. Now even the black king is tied down. White still has to break through, but has multiple ways to do so with moves like 42. Rg1 or even 42. Re2.]



41.Re6 Rxd5 [41...h4 42.gxh4+ Kh5 43.Rg7 Relatively best play, but white still mates eventually. 43...Rb7 44.Rxb7 e2 45.Rh7+ Bh6 46.Rhxh6#] **42.h4# 1–0** ■

Alabama Representatives at the State Champion Tournaments

By Scott Varagona

Congratulations to Alabama's representatives at the national invitational tournaments of scholastic state champions: **Isaac Snow** (Denker representative), **Samuel Baskarraj** (Barber representative), **Shawn Choi** (Rockefeller representative), and **Sarvagna Velidandla** (Ruth Haring Girls Invitational representative). Isaac, Shawn, and Sarvagna each achieved a plus score, with 3.5 points out of 6. (See uschess.org.)

Due to the pandemic, the ACF did not hold a Senior Championship to determine a representative to the Irwin Senior Championship; fortunately, **Kenneth Sloan** (a long-time Alabama delegate to the USCF) was present at the U.S. Open and was invited to represent Alabama in the Irwin tournament, which he did. ■

2021 Birmingham Classic

Crosstables by Caesar Lawrence

Editor's Note: The 2021 Birmingham Classic took place at Asbury United Methodist Church on July 10. There were three sections, with a total of 62 players who participated. Caesar Lawrence served as TD.

The Premier Section had a very strong favorite in GM Alex Fishbein, and a few NMs were playing as well. However, in the end, it was Alabama's rising Expert **Aaron DeCord** who won the tournament, tying for first at 3.5/4 with Ryan Wu of Mississippi. Aaron won the champion's trophy on tiebreaks. Mr. DeCord caused a sensation by defeating GM Fishbein with Black in the final round; see page 24 for annotations.

The Reserve Section ended in a tie for first between **Steven Pan** of Alabama and Winston Wu of Florida, both at 3.5/4. The Amateur Section was won by David Toledo of Tennessee, with a perfect 4-0 score. ■

2021_BIRMINGHAM_CLASSIC: 2021_BC_PREMIER -- Wall Chart (Standings Sort)

#	Name/Rating/ID	St/Tm	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total
1	Aaron DeCord	AL	B 2	W 15	B 10	B 4	
	2102 15675377		0.5	1.5	2.5	3.5	3.5
2	Ryan Boyd Wu	MS	W 1	B 13	W 12	W 5	
	1788 15773598		0.5	1.5	2.5	3.5	3.5
3	Bill Melvin	AL	B 16	W 7	B 5	W 9	
	2200 12406133		1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
4	Alexander Fishbein	NJ	B 18	W 6	B 9	W 1	
	2537 12077910		1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
5	Mitch Fishbein	NJ	W 10	B 19	W 3	B 2	
	2189 14633346		0.5	1.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
6	Drew Justice	GA	W 11	B 4	W 17	B 8	
	2037 14561797		1.0	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.5
7	Charles Meldinger	AL	W 17	B 3	W 11	B 13	
	2030 10237114		1.0	1.0	1.5	2.5	2.5
8	William Wu	FL	B 9	W 14	B 19	W 6	
	1843 15782241		0.0	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.5
9	Scott Varagona	AL	W 8	B 12	W 4	B 3	
	2270 12744446		1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
10	Anthony Schmitz	CA	B 5	W 20	W 1	B 11	
	1830 12827502		0.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0
11	Nathan Yamaguchi	IL	B 6	W 18	B 7	W 10	
	1750 13271522		0.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0
12	Miles Melvin	AL	B 14	W 9	B 2	W 17	
	2031 12699798		1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
13	William Daniel Fox	AL	B 15	W 2	B 18	W 7	
	2012 15820462		0.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
14	David Hayes	AL	W 12	B 8	bye	B 16	
	1730 12538096		0.0	0.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
15	Tyler Schmuggerow	GA	W 13	B 1	W 16	bye	
	1691 14822494		0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5	1.5
16	Sanjay Kumar	GA	W 3	B 17	B 15	W 14	
	1839 16238130		0.0	0.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
17	Aladdin Se Lateef	AL	B 7	W 16	B 6	B 12	
	1707 16736058		0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
18	Joshua Varner	AL	W 4	B 11	W 13	W 19	
	1897p 16969185		0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
19	Sherwood Dong	AL	B 20	W 5	W 8	B 18	
	1681 14582202		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
20	Kirk D Petty	AL	W 19	B 10	---	---	
	1900 10459681		0.0	0.0	U0.0	U0.0	0.0

2021_BIRMINGHAM_CLASSIC: 2021_BC_RESERVE -- Wall Chart (Standings Sort)

#	Name/Rating/ID	St/Tm	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total
1	Steven Pan	AL	B 8	W 11	B 10	B 3	
	1456 15963582		1.0	2.0	2.5	3.5	3.5
2	Winston Wu	FL	W 4	W 10	B 14	W 7	
	976p 30022609		1.0	1.5	2.5	3.5	3.5
3	Samuel Baskarraj	AL	B 21	W 12	B 5	W 1	
	1597 16665811		1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
4	Harshil Yogesh Mehta	AL	B 2	W 20	B 11	W 13	
	1394 14612857		0.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
5	Kristian K Jordan	AL	W 20	B 17	W 3	B 10	
	1478 15193161		1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
6	Adam Anthony Thomas	AL	B 15	W 9	B 12	W 14	
	1037 14611126		0.5	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
7	Anmay Chaudhury		W 16	B 14	W 18	B 2	
	548 16936713		1.0	1.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
8	Saikarunya Kesireddy	AL	W 1	B 16	W 21	B 18	
	1161 16974321		0.0	0.5	1.5	2.5	2.5
9	Cody Limbaugh Smith	AL	W 17	B 6	B 19	W 15	
	1553p 17348382		0.0	0.5	1.5	2.5	2.5
10	Derek James Miller	AL	W 19	B 2	W 1	W 5	
	1386 15390433		1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
11	Sean P O'Hara	AL	W 18	B 1	W 4	B 17	
	1244 12815143		1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
12	Benjamin Kennedy	AL	W 13	B 3	W 6	bye	
	1368 14963224		1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
13	Chris Curcio	TN	B 12	W 21	W 17	B 4	
	unr. 30220618		0.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
14	Jim O'Neal Griffin	AL	- 22	W 7	W 2	B 6	
	1373 12711496		X1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
15	Joseph Graveling	AL	W 6	B 18	W 16	B 9	
	1446 14980584		0.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
16	Shannon L Baker	AL	B 7	W 8	B 15	W 19	
	1366 12511372		0.0	0.5	0.5	1.5	1.5
17	Christopher Boothe	AL	B 9	W 5	B 13	W 11	
	1270p 13829674		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
18	Douglas Strout	AL	B 11	W 15	B 7	W 8	
	1511 13592632		0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
19	Sarah Eliza Peter	AL	B 10	bye	W 9	B 16	
	954 16665770		0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
20	Alisher Khasanov	AL	B 5	B 4	bye	---	
	1222 17028741		0.0	0.0	1.0	U1.0	1.0
21	Thomas Gilbreath	AL	W 3	B 13	B 8	---	
	1345 12621562		0.0	0.0	0.0	U0.0	0.0
22	John Daniel Illig	AL	- 14	---	---	---	
	unr. 30167278		F0.0	U0.0	U0.0	U0.0	0.0

2021_BIRMINGHAM_CLASSIC: 2021_BC_AMATEUR -- Wall Chart (Standings Sort)

#	Name/Rating/ID	St/Tm	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total
1	David Toledo	TN	W 21	B 17	W 4	B 3	
	1122 17092705		1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
2	Otavio T Menezes	KY	W 16	B 18	W 5	B 10	
	631 14491008		0.5	1.5	2.5	3.5	3.5
3	Justin H Rutledge	AL	W 15	B 12	W 6	W 1	
	1062 14248381		1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
4	Nathan Robinson	TN	W 14	B 8	B 1	W 11	
	unr. 30071850		1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
5	Dev Patel	AL	W 11	B 9	B 2	W 16	
	unr. 17318946		0.5	1.5	1.5	2.5	2.5
6	Claiborne Davis	AL	B 19	W 10	B 3	W 7	
	unr. 30212708		1.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.5
7	Aditya Yogesh Mehta	AL	B 10	B 21	W 14	B 6	
	unr. 17108546		0.0	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.5
8	Justin Carl Pelfer	AL	B 20	W 4	W 11	B 19	
	1116p 17305557		1.0	1.0	1.5	2.5	2.5
9	Alton Summers	AL	B 18	W 5	W 17	B 13	
	1191p 30185392		0.5	0.5	1.5	2.5	2.5
10	Michael Kennedy	AL	W 7	B 6	W 12	W 2	
	1037 14963230		1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
11	Whitney Wadsworth	AL	B 5	W 16	B 8	B 4	
	903 17241595		0.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
12	Ved Patel	AL	W 13	W 3	B 10	B 17	
	unr. 30141412		1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
13	Kanishk Mahesh	GA	B 12	bye	W 15	W 9	
	742 17039667		0.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
14	Bishop Herrington	AL	B 4	W 20	B 7	bye	
	1051 16770652		0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
15	Caleb Davidson	AL	B 3	W 19	B 13	W 20	
	unr. 30206763		0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
16	Nathan Santiago	AL	B 2	B 11	W 18	B 5	
	unr. 30216222		0.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
17	Eunice Hong	GA	bye	W 1	B 9	W 12	
	152 30101302		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
18	Christopher Hicklin	AL	W 9	W 2	B 16	B 21	
	438p 17330613		0.5	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0
19	Raj R Patel	AL	W 6	B 15	bye	W 8	
	866 15490645		0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
20	Ryan Hamill	MS	W 8	B 14	W 21	B 15	
	unr.p 30219336		0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
21	Mitchell Ra Jones	AL	B 1	W 7	B 20	W 18	
	299p 30190103		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5

Alabama Online Grand Prix: Invitational Championship

By NM Scott Varagona

At long last, on July 17, the finale of the 2021 Alabama Online Grand Prix Series arrived: the Invitational Championship. The top 8 players (based on various criteria) from the previous 6 qualifying tournaments were seeded into this knockout event, to determine the ultimate Grand Prix champion.

Each round consisted of two rapid games (G/25+5) after which, if the score was even, there would be two blitz tiebreak games (G/8+2). If the score was still even, there would be one last Armageddon game to forcibly break the tie, and the winner would advance to the next round.

This article tells the story of how the Premier (rated 1800+) Section of the Invitational Championship played out, but at the end we provide the final results for the Challenger (1200-1799) and Adepts (<1200) Sections as well.

Round 1 - Quarterfinal

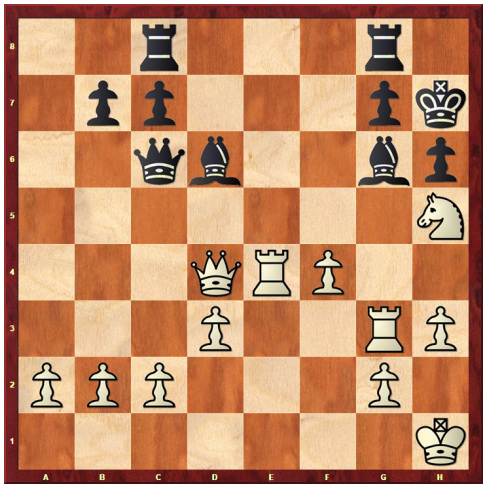
Scott Varagona vs. **Bill Melvin**
Sherwood Dong vs. **Miles Melvin**
Om Badhe vs. **Tom Denton**
Faruk E. Ergin vs. **Samuel Baskarraj**

The first matches of the day started at 8:00 a.m.; for me, Games 1 and 2 were like a shot of adrenaline that morning. You can always count on Bill Melvin to play fighting chess. After an exchange of errors in Game 1, I won as White in a tense time-scramble of a rook endgame. Then Bill seemed to be on the verge of striking back against my Caro-Kann in Game 2, but he somehow misplayed his attack. In the end, it was Bill's king that went down in flames. It was a very close call, but I was relieved to get through to the semifinals.

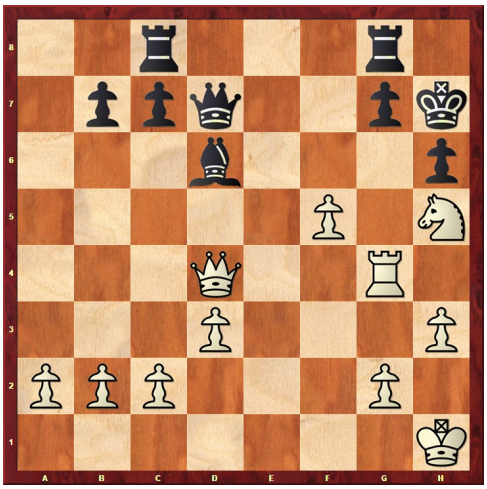
After losing his first game, Miles Melvin was very fortunate to pull a win out of his hat in the next one:

Miles Melvin – Sherwood Dong
Alabama Online Grand Prix
Invitational Ch. (Chess.com), 7/17/2021

1.e4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e5 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.Bc4 Nxe4 5.Bxf7+ Kxf7 6.Nxe4 d5 7.Ng3 e4 8.0–0 exf3 9.Qxf3+ Qf6 10.Qxd5+ Be6 11.Qb5 Rb8 12.d3 Nd4 13.Qa4 Kg8 14.Ne4 Ne2+ 15.Kh1 Qd4 16.Qa5 Nxc1 17.Raxc1 Rc8 18.f4 Qd5 19.Qxa7 Bf5 20.Rce1 Bb4 21.Re2 h6 22.Ng3 Bd7 23.Re5 Qc6 24.Qd4 Bd6 25.Re2 Bg4 26.Re4 Kh7 27.h3 Bd7 28.Nh5 Rhg8 29.Rf3 Bf5 30.Rg3 Bg6



Of course, Black should be winning with the extra piece, but White finds some swindling chances. **31.Rxg6! Kxg6 32.f5+ Kh7 33.Rg4 Qd7??** Very tragic for Black; the computer notes that 33…Bf8! would defend properly.



34.Rxg7+! Rxg7?? And here 34…Qxg7 was forced. Now Black is lost. **35.Nf6+ Kh8 36.Nxd7** The key point: there is no …Rxe7 because of an absolute pin. **36… Re8 37.g4 Re1+ 38.Kg2 Kg8 39.Nf6+ Kf8 40.Ne4 Bf4 41.Qb4+ Kf7 1–0**

Miles did not waste his good fortune and went on to win the blitz tiebreaker. Meanwhile, Om Badhe got past Tom Denton in what can only be described as a series of tense and bizarre games, finally winning the blitz tiebreaker. Faruk Ergin took down Samuel Baskarraj with very aggressive play, chalking up a 2-0 victory.

Round 2 - Semifinal

Scott Varagona vs. **Miles Melvin**
Om Badhe vs. **Faruk E. Ergin**

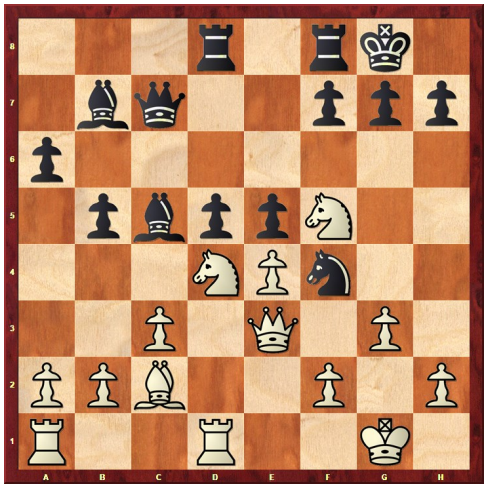
My match versus Miles Melvin felt relatively straightforward; I managed to keep firm positional control in both rapid games and won the match with a 2-0 score.

In contrast, the match between Faruk Ergin and Om Badhe was teeming with drama as the players kept trading blows. In Game 1, Faruk's pieces lost their coordination and Om won the exchange and the game; then, in a must-win situation with Black, Faruk somehow fought back from a very bad position and won Game 2 to equalize the match. In the first blitz tiebreaker game, Faruk blundered his queen to Om's knight fork and had to resign. Then Faruk won on demand in

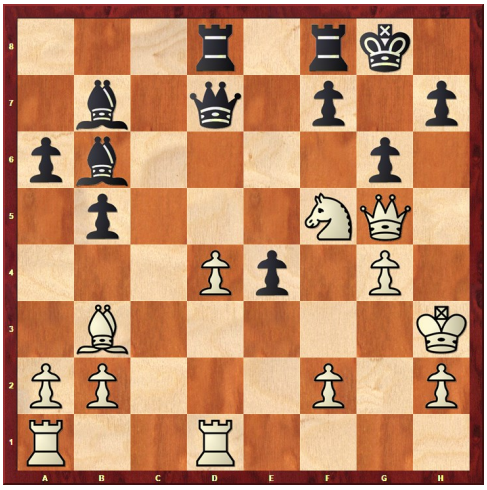
the next game to force yet another tiebreaker. Finally, in the Armageddon game, Faruk chose to take White—and, after some ups and downs, he ultimately used the extra minute on his clock to outplay, and then checkmate, Om:

Faruk Ergin – Om Badhe
Alabama Online Grand Prix
Invitational Ch. (Chess.com), 7/17/2021

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Nd7 4.c3 a6 5.Ba4 Ngf6 6.Bc2 e6 7.0–0 Be7 8.Qe2 0–0 9.d4 Qc7 10.Rd1 b5 11.Bf4 Bb7 12.dxc5 Nxc5 13.Nbd2 e5 14.Bg3 Nh5 15.Nf1 Nxg3 16.Nxg3 Ne6 17.Nf5 Nf4 18.Qd2 Rad8 19.g3 d5 20.Qe3?? Bc5 21.N3d4



21…Nh3+? Missing a chance; Black needed to find the computer's 21…Ne6! to win material safely. **22.Kg2 exd4 23.cxd4 Bb6 24.Bb3 dxe4 25.Kxh3 Qd7 26.g4 g6 27.Qg5**



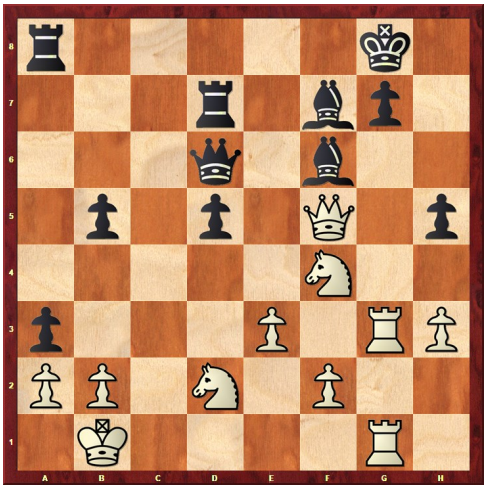
Black still has everything to play for, but a blunder suddenly ends it: **27… Bd5?? 28.Bxd5 Rde8** In time pressure, Black had missed that …Qxd5 runs into Ne7+, which would win the queen. **29.Bb3 e3 30.Qf6 gxf5 31.gxf5 exf2 32.Rg1+ fxg1Q 33.Rxg1# 1–0**. What a nail-biting match!

Round 3 - Final

Scott Varagona vs. **Faruk E. Ergin**

I had defeated Faruk several times before this match, and he had never beaten me up until now. Yet here, in Game 1 of this match, he went "Super Saiyan" and outplayed me convincingly with Black. In an opposite -side castling line of the Carlsbad Queen's Gambit Declined, Black's play was too fast and too strong:

Scott Varagona - Faruk Ergin
Alabama Online Grand Prix
Invitational Ch. (Chess.com), 7/17/2021



31…axb2 Black's threats against the a2-pawn (and White's king) are basically unanswerable. **32.Rxg7+?** Desperation, but White is already lost anyway. **32… Bxg7 33.Qg5 Be8 34.Nd3 Qa3 35.Nb4 Qxb4 0–1**

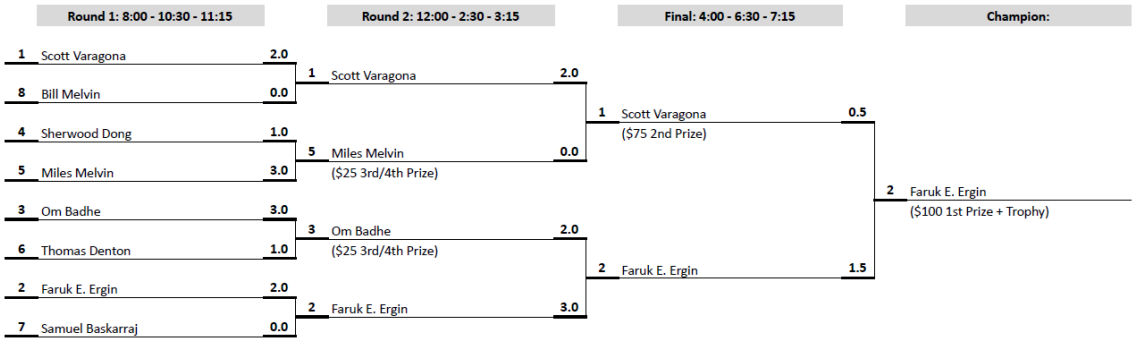
In Game 2, being desperate to win with Black, I shied away from my trusty Caro-Kann (thinking Faruk would choose some overly drawish line) and played the provocative Owen's Defense, 1…b6!?, instead. Although we got an interesting Hippopotamus-style position, it was only ever White who could have claimed to have an advantage; in the end, I was lucky even to draw. But a draw was all Faruk needed to claim the first ever crown as **Alabama Online Grand Prix Champion**.

Congratulations to Faruk, who played with real heart throughout the whole event. Even when the chips were down, he kept his composure and found a way to make something happen. That sort of willpower is what you might call "good chess character."

For my part, I discovered just how brutal knockout tournaments can be. I was leading the entire Grand Prix series since the beginning, only to stumble in the very last match of the championship final, and that was it. Oh, the pain! Thank goodness the Alabama State Championship is always a regular Swiss System event; that is a much more forgiving, and less heart-attack-inducing, format…

Thanks again to everyone involved in making this Grand Prix series a reality, especially the main mastermind behind it, Jonathan Rasberry. The whole series was fun, and I would certainly recommend it to all Alabama players as a unique new challenge. If this series is going to run again next year, then those of us who got knocked out this time had better start plotting our revenge…

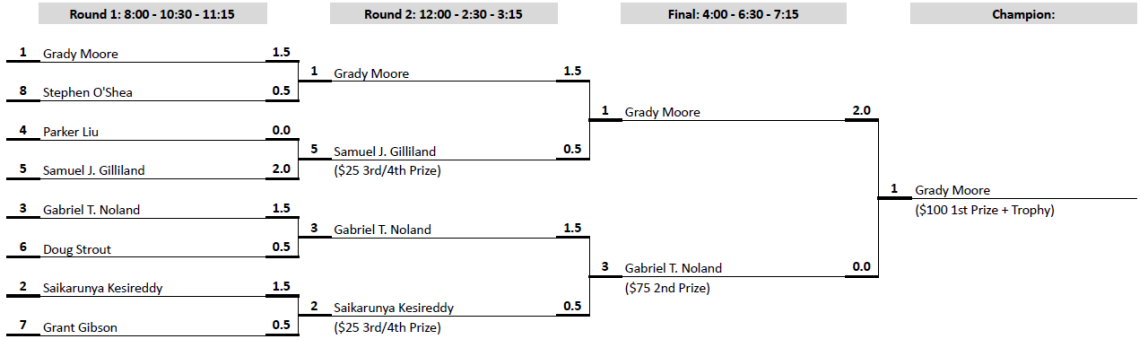
PREMIER (Round #: quick - blitz - armegeddon starting times)


Round 1: 8:00 - 10:30 - 11:15
Round 2: 12:00 - 2:30 - 3:15
Final: 4:00 - 6:30 - 7:15
Champion:
1 Scott Varagona 2.0
8 Bill Melvin 0.0
4 Sherwood Dong 1.0
5 Miles Melvin 3.0
3 Om Badhe 3.0
6 Thomas Denton 1.0
2 Faruk E. Ergin 2.0
7 Samuel Baskarraj 0.0
1 Scott Varagona 2.0
5 Miles Melvin 0.0
($25 3rd/4th Prize)
3 Om Badhe 2.0
($25 3rd/4th Prize)
2 Faruk E. Ergin 3.0
1 Scott Varagona 0.5
($75 2nd Prize)
2 Faruk E. Ergin 1.5
2 Faruk E. Ergin
($100 1st Prize + Trophy)

Prizes:
1st: $100+T
2nd: $75
3rd-4th: $25

Alternate(s):
Joshua M. Varner
Jonathan Rasberry

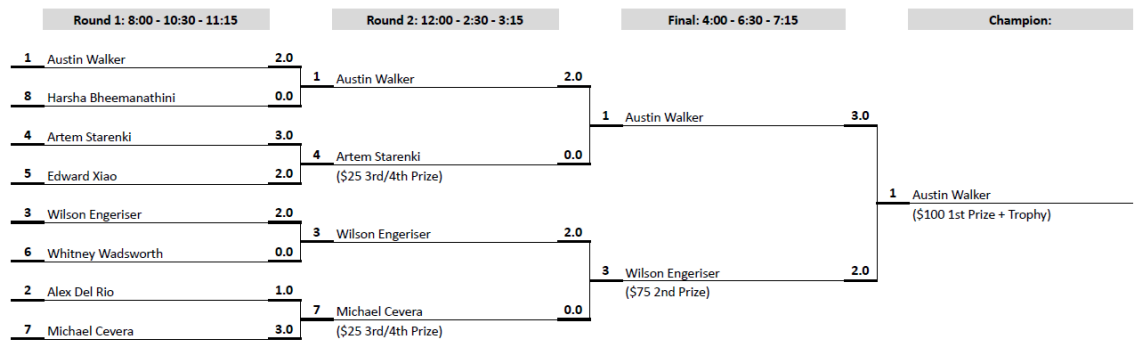
CHALLENGER (Round #: quick - blitz - armegeddon starting times)


Round 1: 8:00 - 10:30 - 11:15
Round 2: 12:00 - 2:30 - 3:15
Final: 4:00 - 6:30 - 7:15
Champion:
1 Grady Moore 1.5
8 Stephen O'Shea 0.5
4 Parker Liu 0.0
5 Samuel J. Gilliland 2.0
3 Gabriel T. Noland 1.5
6 Doug Strout 0.5
2 Saikarunya Kesireddy 1.5
7 Grant Gibson 0.5
1 Grady Moore 1.5
5 Samuel J. Gilliland 0.5
($25 3rd/4th Prize)
3 Gabriel T. Noland 1.5
($25 3rd/4th Prize)
2 Saikarunya Kesireddy 0.5
($25 3rd/4th Prize)
1 Grady Moore 2.0
3 Gabriel T. Noland 0.0
($75 2nd Prize)
1 Grady Moore
($100 1st Prize + Trophy)

Prizes:
1st: $100+T
2nd: $75
3rd-4th: $25

Alternate(s):
Kristian Jordan
Shawn Choi

ADEPTS (Round #: quick - blitz - armegeddon starting times)


Round 1: 8:00 - 10:30 - 11:15
Round 2: 12:00 - 2:30 - 3:15
Final: 4:00 - 6:30 - 7:15
Champion:
1 Austin Walker 2.0
8 Harsha Bheemanathini 0.0
4 Artem Starenki 3.0
5 Edward Xiao 2.0
3 Wilson Engeriser 2.0
6 Whitney Wadsworth 0.0
2 Alex Del Rio 1.0
7 Michael Cevera 3.0
1 Austin Walker 2.0
4 Artem Starenki 0.0
($25 3rd/4th Prize)
3 Wilson Engeriser 2.0
7 Michael Cevera 0.0
($25 3rd/4th Prize)
1 Austin Walker 3.0
3 Wilson Engeriser 2.0
($75 2nd Prize)
1 Austin Walker
($100 1st Prize + Trophy)

Prizes:
1st: $100+T
2nd: $75
3rd-4th: $25

Alternate(s):
Jacob New

Charts & results courtesy of Jonathan Rasberry. ■

Ten Years of the Dual-Rated Championship

by Scott Varagona & Doug Strout

The 2021 Alabama Dual-Rated State Championship took place at Evangel Church in Montgomery on July 24. With 39 players participating, this tournament tied the record for the best-attended Evangel Chess Club event. Doug Strout was the TD.

The Open Section was particularly hard-fought, as 3/4 turned out to be the winning score: Faris Gabbara (of Michigan), **Scott Varagona**, and **Faruk Ergin** tied for first. Due to head-to-head tiebreaks (having defeated Faruk in their individual game), Scott took the Alabama Dual-Rated Championship trophy. For Faruk, becoming Dual-Rated co-champion continues his streak of success this summer as he just recently became Alabama Online Grand Prix Champion as well.

The Under-1800 Section was won by Nathan Robinson of Tennessee, with 3.5/4. **Jacob Kim** and **Adam Thomas**, with 3 points, were the top Alabama players in that section. The Under-1200 Section was won by **Wilson Engeriser** with a clean 4/4 score.

According to tournament records on uschess.org, the 2021 edition of this tournament was the tenth Alabama Dual-Rated Championship. All ten of these tournaments have been sponsored by Evangel Chess Club, with Doug Strout as the Chief TD. To commemorate ten years of the Dual, here is a comprehensive list of all the champions through the years.

Alabama Dual-Rated Champions

2012
Open = Rex Blalock
U1600 = Christopher Trees & Jonathan Rasberry

2013
Open = Scott Varagona
U1600 = Neil Dietsch

2014
Open = Scott Varagona
U1800 = Jerome Flowers & William Sherrill
U1200 = Esther Graveling & Roger Richardson

2015
Open = Stephen Adams
U1800 = Om Badhe
U1200 = Taylor Kent

2016
Open = Jonathan Rasberry (co-champion: Scott Varagona)
U1800 = Tejas Thorat
U1200 = Kristian Jordan

2017
Open = Scott Varagona
U1800 = Christian Friedman & Isaac Snow
U1200 = Raghavan Madabushi

2018
Open = Tyler Freeman
U1800 = Ethan Smith
U1200 = Sam Baskarraj

2019
Open = Yury Barnakov
U1800 = Sam Baskarraj (only player to win different sections in consecutive years)
U1200 = Akhil Batchu

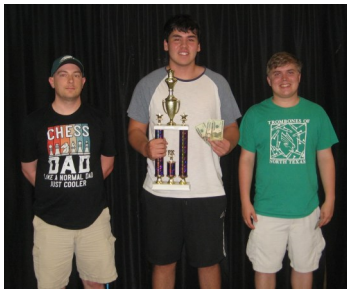
2020
Open = Isaac Snow
U1800 = Dan Williams
U1200 = Daniel Seewald

2021
Open = Scott Varagona (co-champion: Faruk Ergin)
U1800 = Jacob Kim & Adam Thomas
U1200 = Wilson Engeriser

In closing, Doug Strout would also like to make the following remark:

"Evangel Chess Club is very grateful to the leadership and the people of Evangel Church for their support over the years, which has made possible this ten-year run of the Dual-Rated Championship. Evangel's attitude toward the pandemic has been to live smart, but still live, which made the 2020 and 2021 Duals possible. It's a great church with terrific people."

The Alabama chess community is indeed grateful to Evangel, and to Doug Strout, for hosting quality chess events all these years. ■

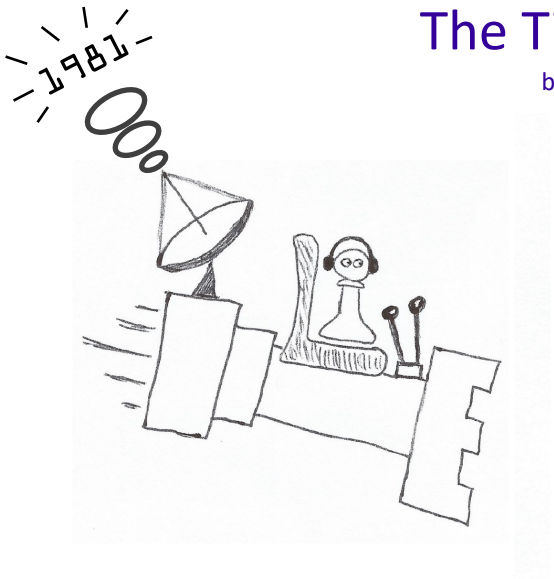


Above: the 2021 Dual winners. At top, the Open winners (left to right) are Gabbara, Varagona, and Ergin; at bottom left, U1200 winner; at bottom right, U1800 winners.

"Mr. Dual" himself: TD Doug Strout. (Photo from alabamachess.org.)

The Time Machine

by Scott Varagona



40 years ago, in 1981…

- Brent Inman tied for first (with Richard Powers of Florida) at the 1981 Queen of Hearts with 4/5 points; Brent took the trophy on tiebreaks. In third place was a young Stuart Rachels. Meanwhile, Lamar Daniel, Lars Britt, and Charles Koch tied for first in the Amateur section. (April 1981 *Antics*.)

- Ken Goodman won the 1981 Montgomery Chess Championship with 3.5/4. (June 1981 *Antics*.)

- Led by Tom Denton, the McGill-Toolen high school team won its third straight Mobile County High School Chess League championship. (June 1981 *Antics*.)

- Stuart Rachels won the 1981 Space City Open and ultimately set a new record by becoming the youngest U.S. National Master up to that time. (June 1981 & November 1981 *Antics*.)

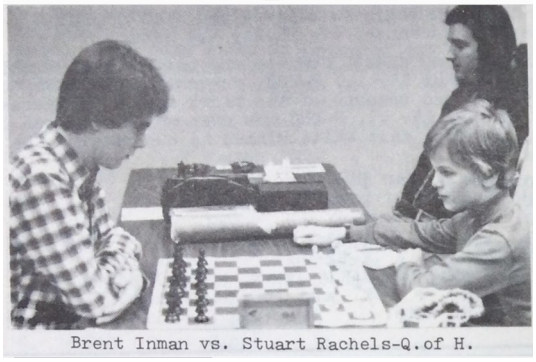

Brent Inman vs. Stuart Rachels-Q.of H.

Photo from April 1981 Antics.

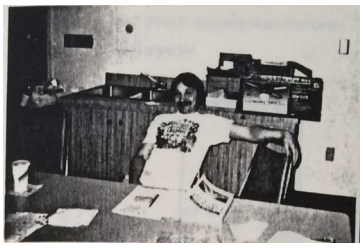
- Marty Appleberry & Joe Jurjevich tied for first with 4.5/5 at the 1981 Vulcan Open. (June 1981 *Antics*.)

- Kyle Therrell won the Birmingham City Championship by defeating Stuart Rachels in a match. Later, Kyle won clear first at the 1981 Alabama Chess Championship with a 6/7 score. (November 1981 *Antics*.)

30 years ago, in 1991…

- Andrew Whatley became the Alabama Elementary Champion with a 6-0 score. (*Antics* 1991 vol. 2.)

- Bill Melvin submitted what seems to be his first ever article to the *Antics* and won the 1991 Vulcan Open. (*Antics* 1991 vol. 3, vol. 4.)



Rich Bellezza. (Antics 1992 vol. 1.)

- Hisham Sunna and Charles Meidinger became Alabama State Champions, with Hisham taking the trophy on tiebreaks. Rich Bellezza served as the TD. (*Antics* 1992 vol. 1.)

20 years ago, in 2001…

- Scott Varagona won the Vulcan Open; this was his first ever win at a major open tournament in Alabama. (*ChessKid Antics* Autumn 2001.)

- Bill Melvin took clear first place in the Alabama State Championship with 5.5/6. Matthew Puckett and Tim Bond finished joint second with 5/6. (November 2001 *Antics*.)

Who is that young whippersnapper?... Your editor, circa 2001. (ChessKid Antics Autumn 2001.)

10 years ago, in 2011…

- ChessKidsNation won the Open Section of the Alabama Scholastic Team Championship. Jeffrey Byrd won the Alabama Scholastic Individual Championship with a perfect score. (Spring 2011 *Antics*.)

- Caesar Lawrence won the Alabama Quick Chess Championship. (Summer 2011 *Antics*.)

- Gerald Larson scored an upset victory against IM Emory Tate at the Alabama State Championship, thus clearing the way for Will Stevenson to win a second Alabama champion title. (Fall 2011 Winter 2012 *Antics*.) ■

Game of the Quarter:

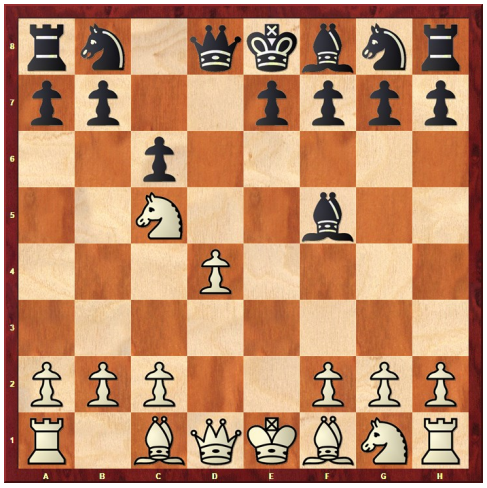
My First (and Probably Last) GM Scalp

by Aaron DeCord

Needless to say, I didn't give myself much of a chance going into this game. My opponent, GM Alexander Fishbein, was rated 437 points higher than me and I had the black pieces. The possibility of winning wasn't even on my radar, even though it's what I had to do to win the tournament, as I was a half-point behind my opponent in the standings. I was just hoping I might learn a thing or two from how he went about blowing me off the board. That's not exactly how things turned out, though.

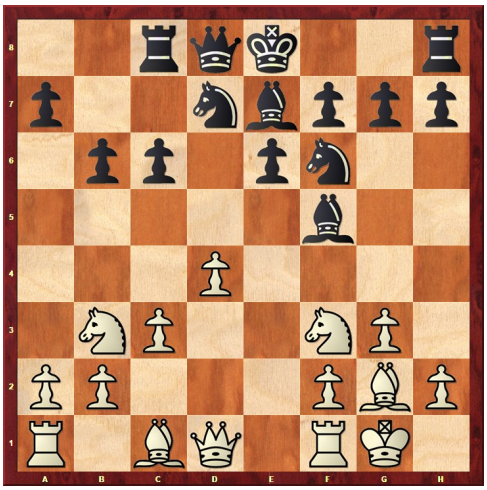
Alexander Fishbein - Aaron DeCord
(2539) (2102)
Birmingham Classic (Rd 4), 7-10-2021

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Nc5



I had never faced this sideline over-the-board before. I knew that 5...e5 was a move here, but I figured my opponent, being the GM that he is, knew that line better than I did, so I decided to just play solidly instead.

5...b6 6.Nb3 e6 7.Nf3 Nf6 8.g3 Be7 9.Bg2 Nbd7 10.0–0 Rc8 11.c3

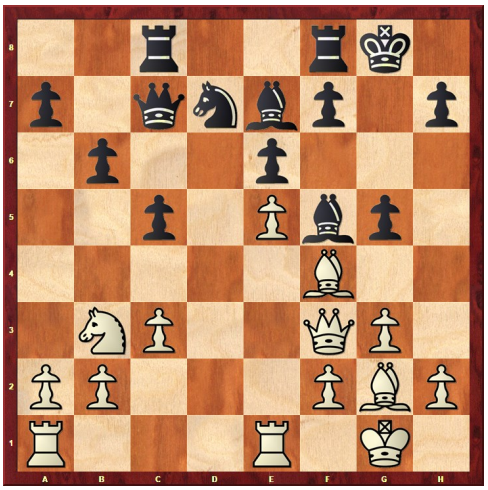


I think white wanted to play Ne5 here, but he may have been concerned about 11.Ne5 Nxe5 12.dxe5 Qxd1 13.Rxd1 Nd7, where he can't defend both pawns. He would still have had 14.Nd4 here though, so perhaps 11.c3 was simply intended to fortify the center.

11...0–0 12.Ne5 Nxe5 13.dxe5 Nd7 14.Re1 c5

Preventing Nd4, which looked positionally devastating if allowed.

15.Bf4 Qc7 16.Qf3 g5!?



A committal move, but one that forces white to make an awkward decision. He can either give up the e5-pawn for free and hope that this newly created weakness on the kingside will prove to be sufficient compensation (which I thought was unlikely), or he can push his own g-pawn and thereby free up the g3-square for his dark-squared bishop.

17.g4

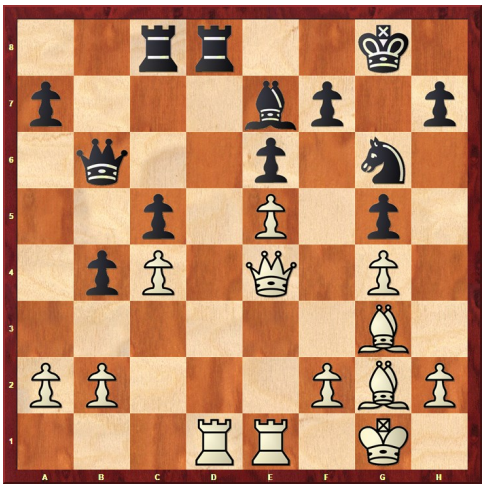
He chooses the latter. This is definitely the correct decision objectively, but as we will see, white's dark-squared bishop becomes a non-factor in the game from this point on.

17...Bg6 18.Bg3 b5 19.Bf1 Qb6 20.Rad1 Rfd8 21.c4 b4 22.Nd2 Nf8

I also briefly considered 22...Nb8, but I realized that I would need the knight on the kingside for defensive purposes after the inevitable exchange of the g6-bishop.

23.Ne4 Bxe4 24.Qxe4 Ng6 25.Bg2?

The critical mistake of the game. I think he simply overlooked my next move.



25...Qa6!

And now we see the problem with 25.Bg2. The queen can't

simultaneously guard both the c4- and a2-pawns, and if he relinquishes the d-file to try to defend (with 26.Ra1 for example, which would be a sad move to have to play anyway, even if it worked), then Rd4 becomes a possibility for black.

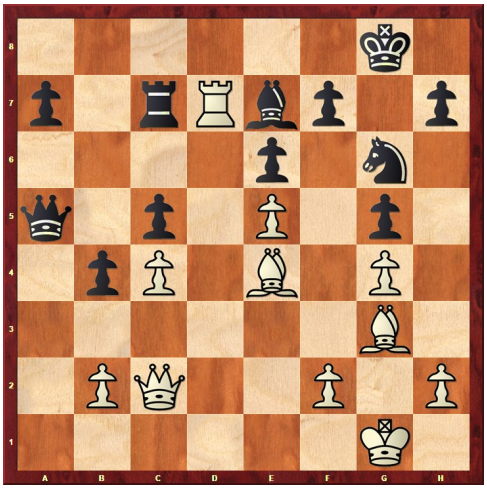
26.Qc2 Rxd1 27.Rxd1 Qxa2

So now black is up a clear pawn, and white has to prove that his bishop pair and control of the center are enough compensation.

28.Be4 Qa5?!

Not the best move, but I wanted to be able to challenge the rook when it came to d7.

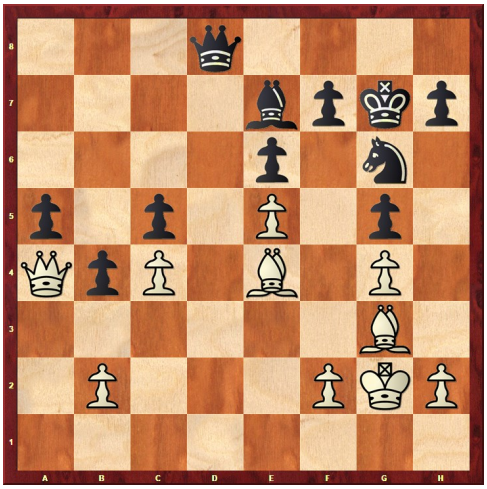
29.Rd7 Rc7



30.Rxc7

This move surprised me at first. I thought white might try something like 30.Qd2, but then he has to worry about 30...Rxd7 31.Qxd7 Qa1+ 32.Kg2 Bf8 33.b3 a5 where his center is coming under serious pressure, and if he ever trades off the light-squared bishop, there will be no way to save the b3-pawn.

30...Qxc7 31.Qa4 a5 32.Qe8+ Kg7 33.Kg2 Qd8 34.Qa4?

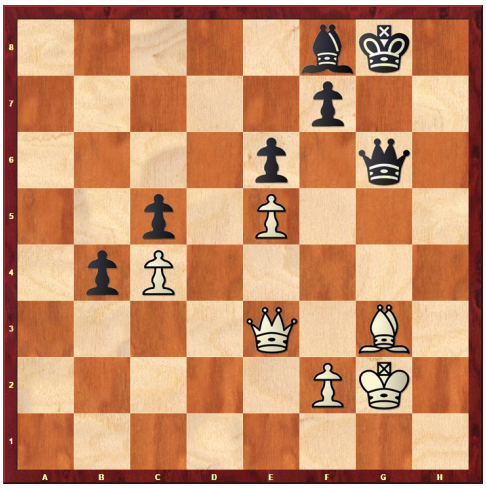


The best move was to trade the queens and just try to hold on. Now white can't stop black from getting a passed pawn on the queenside in very short order.

34...Qd4 35.Qc2 a4! 36.Bxg6 hxg6 37.Qxa4 Qxb2 38.Qd7 Bf8

Now it's just a matter of technique.

39.h4 Qc1 40.h5 gxh5 41.gxh5 Qc2 42.h6+ Kg8 43.Qd8 Qg6 44.h7+ Qxh7 45.Qxg5+ Qg6 46.Qe3



I stopped taking notation here due to time pressure, but black eventually won after 10–15 more moves. **0–1** ■

Congratulations to Aaron DeCord (pictured right) for thwarting a "grandmaster invasion," and winning yet another Alabama tournament, in grand style. -Ed

ALABAMA CHESS ANTICS

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Upcoming Tournaments

See www.alabamachess.org for updates on these and other events.

August 7	**Chris Bond Memorial**	**Montgomery, AL**
September 18-19	**Alabama State Chess Championship**	**Montgomery, AL**

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To submit articles, pictures and games to the *Antics*, email the *Antics* editor at

Alabama.Chess.Editor@gmail.com

Games in .pgn format are strongly preferred.

Please contact **jonathan.rasberry@alabamachess.org** if you are interested in helping with the Alabama Chess Federation.

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